

THE RHODE ISLAND RESPONSE TO CANCER

After reviewing several known strategies for cancer control, the burden of cancer to Rhode Islanders, and the national 2010 objectives, objectives were selected in the following four key areas to address the RI problem: (1) Cancer Surveillance; (2) Cancer Prevention; (3) Cancer Screening; and (4) Cancer Treatment.

Cancer Surveillance

The overall goal for this intervention is to improve cancer surveillance in Rhode Island. This will be accomplished through four objectives: enhance the infrastructure of cancer surveillance in RI; conduct timely and comprehensive cancer surveillance; increase the dissemination of cancer control data; and develop additional cancer control surveillance capacity.

Cancer Prevention

RI has several existing and proposed programs that aim to prevent cancer. These programs, each with their own set of goals and objectives, include:

- *Tobacco control* – Use of tobacco smoke is related to, among other things, lung cancer. The RI Tobacco Control Program addresses smoking as a major health problem. The goals of this program include tobacco prevention among youth, smoking cessation, elimination of environmental tobacco smoke, and elimination of tobacco use disparities.
- *Cervical cancer prevention* – The focus of cervical cancer prevention is the promotion of safe sex. Although there is no program directly related to cervical cancer prevention, the Office of Communicable Diseases promotes abstaining from sexual intercourse, limiting relationships to those between mutually monogamous partners, and using latex condoms during sexual activity.
- *Obesity control* – The foci of obesity control are nutrition and physical activity. Poor diets and sedentary lifestyles have been related to several cancers. The RI Obesity Control Program aims to reduce obesity and related chronic diseases. This goal will be reached through the development of a “statewide system to implement and evaluate nutrition and physical activity programs within priority communities,”
- *Skin cancer prevention* – The focus of skin cancer prevention is to reduce exposure to ultraviolet light. Skin cancer prevention (and skin cancer screening) is a part of the proposed skin cancer program. The goal of the prevention aspect of this program would be to reduce skin cancer by promoting healthy skincare behaviors.

Cancer Screening

RI has several existing and proposed programs that promote cancer screening. These programs, each with their own objectives, include:

- *Breast cancer screening* – RI Women’s Cancer Screening Program provides free breast cancer (and cervical cancer) screening services for RI females who are 50 or older, uninsured or underinsured, and with incomes at or less than 250% of the poverty level. The goal for the breast cancer aspect of this program is to reduce the burden of breast

cancer in Rhode Island by increasing the percentage of females who receive a mammogram.

- *Cervical cancer screening* – RI Women’s Cancer Screening Program provides free cervical cancer (and breast cancer) screening services for RI females who are 50 or older, uninsured or underinsured, and with incomes at or less than 250% of the poverty level. The goal for the cervical cancer aspect of this program is to reduce the burden of cervical cancer in Rhode Island by increasing the percentage of females who receive a pap smear.
- *Colorectal cancer screening* – Colorectal cancer screening is a part of the proposed colorectal cancer program. The goal of this program would be to reduce colorectal cancer by promoting screening exams (sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, and proctoscopic exam) through professional education and public education.
- *Prostate cancer screening* – Prostate cancer screening (and treatment) is a part of the proposed prostate cancer program. The goal of this program would be to reduce prostate cancer by assuring that all eligible males are informed about the risks and benefits of prostate cancer screening, and that screening is available to all males who request to be screened.
- *Ovarian cancer* – Ovarian cancer screening is a part of the proposed ovarian cancer program. The goal of this program would be to increase awareness of risk factors for ovarian cancer, and to promote genetic testing among high-risk populations.
- *Skin cancer screening* – Skin cancer screening (and prevention) is a part of the proposed skin cancer program. The goal of this program would be to reduce skin cancer by assuring that health care providers and patients perform visual inspections and remain alert for skin lesions.
- *Oral cavity cancer screening* – Oropharyngeal cancer screening is a part of the oral health program. The screening goal of this program is to reduce oropharyngeal cancer by assuring that health care providers and patients perform visual inspections and remain alert for lesions in the oral cavity.

Cancer Treatment

The overall goal for this intervention is to improve cancer treatment in Rhode Island. This will be accomplished through five objectives: support state-of-the-art breast cancer treatment through development and dissemination of a breast cancer treatment algorithm; support state-of-the-art colorectal cancer treatment through development and dissemination of a colorectal cancer treatment algorithm; increase enrollment in clinical trials; promote and support the adoption of American College of Surgeons (ACOS) approved cancer programs in all acute care hospitals; and assure accurate tumor staging with American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) staging methodology.

Palliative care

The overall goal for this intervention is to increase the use of palliative care services in Rhode Island. This will be accomplished through one objective: develop a campaign to increase awareness among patients and family caregivers about hospice care options.